

# Dog Resource Handbook



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# The 4-H Dog Project

## Overview

The 4-H dog program provides positive learning experiences and opportunities for diverse youth, encouraging them to reach their potential through year-round active involvement in dog projects and activities. Dog projects provide the catalyst for youth to experience and practice life skills until they are mastered and used in everyday activities, helping youth develop as competent, capable, caring, and contributing citizens.

4-H volunteer advisors are caring adults who teach youth how to socialize and train their dogs to be well behaved in their homes and communities, and around other dogs. They give their support and expertise on a year-round basis, as the commitment of youth to their dogs is yearlong. Advisors teach youth responsible dog ownership and the skills needed to safely handle and train dogs. Providing an emotionally and physically safe environment for members allows them to focus on learning the cognitive and physical skills needed to be successful with their dog projects.

4-H members are engaged in, practice, and demonstrate proficiencies with their dogs at various levels of obedience, showmanship, rally, team and brace, and agility. They are engaged in hands-on learning opportunities through dog

skillathons, knowledge bowl games, and county and state fair evaluations. Youth who are not as interested in showing their dogs can still “show off” what they have learned and taught their dogs in a family dog (dog care) evaluation. 4-H members express creativity by designing educational dog posters and by creating obedience and style patterns for dog drill team demonstrations and competitions.

Raising a puppy for Pilot Dogs, Inc., or other assistance dog organizations, gives youth opportunities to socialize, manner, and train puppies to eventually provide a service to their human partners, who gain a new sense of freedom and independence.

The bond that develops between youth and dogs provides a stimulus for youth to help others in their community. Through the 4-H PetPALS program, 4-H members and their dogs visit senior adults in nursing homes or assisted living facilities. They visit youth and adults with physical or cognitive disabilities. 4-H

members and their dogs participate in walk-a-thons and other community service projects. Youth participate with their dogs in 4-H project awareness opportunities in schools and throughout the community.

Youth learn critical-thinking skills through training opportunities in dog care, agility, obedience, showmanship, assistance dogs, and



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rally. They are prepared for the unexpected when working with dogs. 4-H members learn how to be flexible, as well as how to think clearly and rationally when confronted with situations during handling, socializing, and training their dogs.

4-H members practice setting short-term and long-term goals for their projects and 4-H careers. Youth have opportunities to explore careers related to dogs and the dog industry. Dog projects can serve as stepping stones to future involvement with dogs and dog-related organizations, such as kennel and breed clubs, dog rescue groups, and humane societies.

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## Guidelines for Completing a 4-H Dog Project

1. The *Dog Resource Handbook* contains subject matter that helps 4-H members be successful with their 4-H dog projects. Each 4-H dog project member is required to have access to the *Dog Resource Handbook*. Individual members can purchase their own copies, or one handbook may be purchased and shared among family members.
2. Complete one or more sections of the 4-H 201 *Dog Project and Record Book* that corresponds to the type of project(s) you are taking:
  - **You and Your Dog:** For youth who prefer to enjoy the companionship of their dogs without involvement in competitive events, such as obedience, showmanship, and performance events. Also recommended for first-year members just learning about dogs.
  - **Obedience:** Covers beginning and advanced obedience training.
  - **Showmanship:** Includes the basics of dog showmanship.
  - **Performance Dog:** Includes agility, drill team, and other performance events.
  - **Working Dogs:** Includes assistance dogs such as Pilot Dogs, Inc., Canine Companions, and others.

3. Keep accurate project records for each type of project and each dog taken.
4. Assume continual care of your dog(s) throughout the project year.
5. Follow state and county guidelines for ownership, training, and showing.
6. Make sure your project registration and/or entry form is completed and submitted to your county Extension office on time.
7. If you plan to participate in pre-fair, county fair, or state fair activities, know your county's guidelines and rules, and know your state fair rules.

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## Benefits to a 4-H Member

1. **Life skills development.** As a dog owner, you learn many life skills that help you become a responsible and competent individual. Some of these life skills include managing resources, making decisions, solving problems, learning to learn, reasoning, thinking critically, keeping records, planning and organizing, achieving goals, communicating, cooperating, sharing, caring for others, being empathetic, learning through community service, completing a project/task, motivating yourself, and being responsible.
2. **Selection.** Whether you and/or your family currently own a dog, or you plan to own one in the near future, knowing which questions to ask and breed characteristics to look for make selecting the right puppy or dog a rewarding experience.
3. **Record keeping.** One requirement for completing your dog project is keeping accurate records. Inaccurate records do not reflect what you have accomplished with your project. By keeping good records from the beginning of your project, you learn how much it costs to keep your dog, including expenditures for feed, equipment, veterinary care, training, and showing. Keep records on a weekly or monthly basis. Do not wait until







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so much time has passed that it is hard to remember what you have done. Keep receipts when you purchase anything for your project. This helps you learn the expenses involved in owning a dog.

4. **Nutrition.** You learn the nutrient requirements of dogs, and how their diet affects their overall health.
5. **Health.** You learn how to participate in a year-round wellness program to keep your dog healthy and prevent diseases.
6. **Competition.** You benefit from learning to care for and show your project, and to compete gracefully.
7. **Ownership pride.** Owning and caring for dogs gives you a feeling of pride and satisfaction. Forming a close bond with your pet provides you with endless hours of companionship.
8. **Professional and social development.** Taking a dog project brings you into contact with successful dog owners, breeders, and judges, as well as project leaders and other 4-H members.
9. **Career exploration.** Meeting professionals in the dog world and learning the importance of dogs in society gives you opportunities to explore careers in the companion animal businesses and an appreciation for this fast-growing industry.
10. **Animal welfare.** Your awareness of the issues of animal well-being and ethics is increased. Animals play a vital role in society, and therefore deserve our protection and compassion.



## Teamwork for the Common Goal

The purpose of all project work is to enhance the education, experience, and development of young people, a purpose that is not realized without the involvement of several people working as a team. Successful completion of the dog project depends upon the combined efforts of parents or guardians, experts, 4-H leaders, club advisors, and you, the 4-H member. All contribute to successful teamwork.

## A Message to Parents or Guardians

This *Dog Resource Handbook* is intended for youth eight years old and in the third grade through eighteen years old. The reading level and terminology in this book is difficult for a younger 4-H member.

**It is very important that a younger 4-H member has the help of an older youth or adult to interpret and understand the information in this book.**

Behind most successful club members are parents or guardians who are truly enthusiastic about the projects their children are taking. These parents offer supervision, assistance, and encouragement to the 4-H member

working through projects. The payoff from this involvement is an exciting learning experience and sometimes may even include honors and prizes at county and state fairs. If you are willing to help in these ways, you can make a big difference.

Be aware that while adult support is clearly important, it is equally important that adults not go too far. That is, as a parent or guardian of a 4-H member undertaking a project, you should assist and supervise only to a reasonable extent. Help out as much as is necessary, but do not do the various chores and requirements called for by the project. These are for the 4-H member to do. It is also inappropriate for a professional to own, train, or care for the project dog(s). Families and 4-H members own the project animals, but 4-H members are responsible for their care and training.

Also keep in mind that most projects, especially those involving animals, require adjustments at home and some investments to be successful. For this project, proper housing, equipment and supplies, nutrition, veterinary care, and training are needed to help the 4-H member have a successful experience. Resources for keeping records are also necessary.

Remember, the 4-H member's success in this and all projects depends to a large extent on the encouragement and support—in the appropriate measures—that only you can give.



Courtesy Sara Deakin, Ohio State University Extension



## Note to the Project Helper

Congratulations! A 4-H member or other youth has asked you to serve as a project helper. You may be a parent, relative, project leader, friend, club advisor, or another important person. As a project helper, it is up to you to encourage, guide, and assist. How you choose to be involved helps to shape the learner's life skills and knowledge.

## Your Role: Help Youth Thrive

Your contribution is critical to delivery of the 4-H program, which is committed to positive youth development (PYD). The 4-H Thriving Model, the theory of change for positive youth development, connects high-quality program settings to the promotion of youth thriving. That is where you come in.

High-quality 4-H program settings provide youth a place to belong, matter, and explore their personal spark. These components, along with strong relationships with caring adults and supportive peers, help ensure that 4-H programs provide a nourishing **developmental context**—a place where youth feel a sense of belonging and can grow.

High-quality 4-H programs contribute to PYD through the intentional promotion of social, emotional, and cognitive learning. This process is described by seven indicators of **youth thriving** (see model).

Youth who experience program settings with these intentional social, emotional, and cognitive indicators achieve key positive youth **developmental outcomes**. They are then also more likely to achieve **long-term outcomes** marked by academic or vocational success, civic engagement, employability and economic stability, and happiness and well-being.

For more information on the 4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development, please go to [helping-youth-thrive.extension.org](http://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org).

## 4-H Thriving Model

### LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Academic or Vocational Success
- Civic Engagement
- Employability & Economic Stability
- Happiness & Wellbeing

### DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

#### (Positive Youth Development)

- Positive Academic Attitude
- Social Competence
- Personal Standards
- Connection with Others
- Personal Responsibility
- Contribution

### YOUTH THRIVING

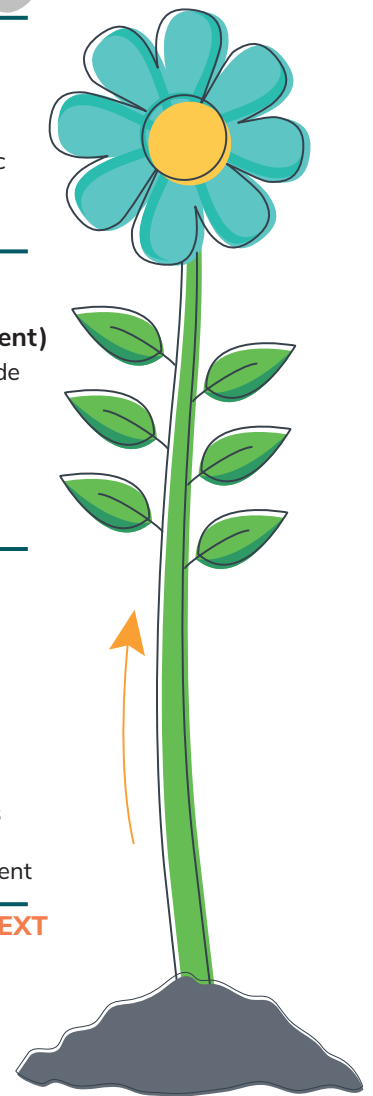
#### (Social, Emotional & Cognitive Learning)

- Growth Mindset
- Openness to Challenge & Discovery
- Hopeful Purpose
- Prosocial Orientation
- Transcendent Awareness
- Positive Emotions
- Goal Setting & Management

### DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

#### (4-H Programs)

- Sparks
- Belonging
- Relationships
- Engagement



## What You Can Do

On a practical level, your role as a project helper means you will strive to do the following:

- Review the Learning Outcomes for each activity to understand the learning taking place. See the back of each project book for the Summary of Learning Outcomes.
  - Become familiar with each activity, including the background information. Stay ahead of the learner by trying out activities beforehand.
  - Help the learner establish a plan by reviewing the Project Guide. As a resource person, limit your involvement to providing support.
- As activities are completed, conduct debriefing sessions that allow the learner to share results and answer questions. This important step improves understanding. In the Project Guide, date and initial completed activities.
  - Help the learner celebrate what was done well and see what could be done differently. Allow the learner to become better at assessing their own work. Encourage exploration of the topic beyond the scope of the project book.

*Thank you for supporting positive youth development.*



Courtesy Sara Deakin, Ohio State University Extension



## A Message to 4-H Members

After you have made the decision to take a dog project, it is important to know what you want to learn throughout the project year. Dogs are year-round companions as well as project animals. They are a part of your family, and at the end of the project, you will continue to care for your dog and keep that bond strong. Information in this resource handbook should help you learn more about dogs and better prepare you to be successful with your project. Learning about the dog's anatomy, senses, behavior, communication, health, and nutrition helps you understand more about canines. You can learn about the various show aspects, have the opportunity to practice obedience and showmanship, or simply learn about caring for your dog as the "family" dog, with no intent of taking your dog to a show.

By teaching you these principles through information and experience, this project makes it possible for you to be a responsible and knowledgeable dog owner able to fully appreciate the significance of the human-animal bond. To succeed in this project you must be willing to study, review, and apply the information contained in this handbook.

## Results of 4-H Youth Development Programs

Research has shown that as a result of 4-H Youth Development programs:

### 1. Youth develop marketable skills for lifelong success.

Youth gain important leadership, communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. These abilities are gained through the numerous projects and activities in which youth participate as 4-H members. Such skills are important not only to the immediate success of the 4-H projects but to the continued success of many endeavors.

### 2. Youth engage in community service and citizenship to transform local communities.

This goes beyond just conducting a project; its focus is on recognizing that youth can

make valuable contributions to their local communities. Youth *can* make a difference.

### 3. Youth appreciate and build upon diversity to foster a harmonious global society.

This is a critical awareness tool for the success of youth today and far into the future. Rather than looking at the differences in people as potential sources of conflict and disengagement, our goal is for our youth to recognize differences as opportunities for positive and rewarding experiences.

### 4. Youth build sustained relationships with adults that enable them to become better citizens.

We can all remember the significant contributions an adult had during our adolescent lives. Similarly, adult 4-H volunteers should make a great positive impact on the lives of 4-H youth.

### 5. Volunteers build skills and abilities to more effectively work with youth.

Land-grant universities throughout the nation provide educational opportunities in subject areas, working effectively with youth and leading positive youth development programs. Extension professionals and other university faculty and staff teach volunteers the many skills and abilities needed to work effectively with youth through educational workshops, clinics, and conferences.



Ohio State University Extension



## Chapter 1

Words in **bold** throughout this book are defined in the glossary.

# Characteristics of Dogs

## What Makes a Dog a Dog

Dogs, like humans, are mammals. That is, both are warm-blooded vertebrates that nourish their young with milk.

Are dogs carnivores or omnivores? Dogs are carnivores because they exist on a diet of meat in the wild, and if given a choice, they prefer to eat fresh meat. However, modern dogs need additional nutrients for a balanced diet, and they like to eat and digest most food types. (This is unlike cats, who are true carnivores and who must have meat in their diets.) Even though dogs are considered carnivores, they eat an omnivorous diet, as most dog rations contain plant and animal foods.

All domestic dogs have many common characteristics. Carnivores possess four carnassial teeth, distinguishing them from all other meat eaters. As predators, dogs crush and cut meat and grind food and hard substances with their four upper pre-molars and the first lower molars. Mature dogs have a total of 42 teeth.

Dogs are mammals, giving birth (called whelping) to their young, called puppies. They nurse their puppies by mammary (milk-producing) glands that may or may not be covered by visible hair.

Dogs have 50 to 52 total vertebrae: 7 cervical, 13 thoracic, 7 lumbar, 3 sacral, and 20 to 22 coccygeal (tail). The irises of their eyes circularly contract. They have 78 chromosomes.

Dogs have four active toes (digits) on each foot. All dogs have **dewclaws** on the inside of their front feet that historically were probably larger, serving as fifth toes, but now have no function. Some dogs have dewclaws on their



Archive photo

hind feet. Dogs' claws do not retract like those of cats.

Dog **gestation** averages 63 days, and puppies' eyes open at about two weeks of age. Dogs' body language and expressions

are similar when they show signs of playfulness, aggression, submission, fear, and other sentiments. They vocalize in the same manner using growling, barking, howling, and whining to express themselves in different situations.

Here is common dog terminology you should know: The term **dog** is used to designate either a male or female dog. However, the term also means "a male canine." The term **bitch** denotes a female canine. The term **whelp**, used as a verb, means "to give birth to puppies," but whelp, used as a noun, refers to "an unweaned puppy." A **puppy** is a young dog, usually under 12 months old. A **dam** is the female parent (mother) of a dog, and the **sire** is the male parent (father).

## History of the Dog

Domestic dogs are listed in the scientific classification of animals within the class Mammalia, order Carnivora, family Canidae,

